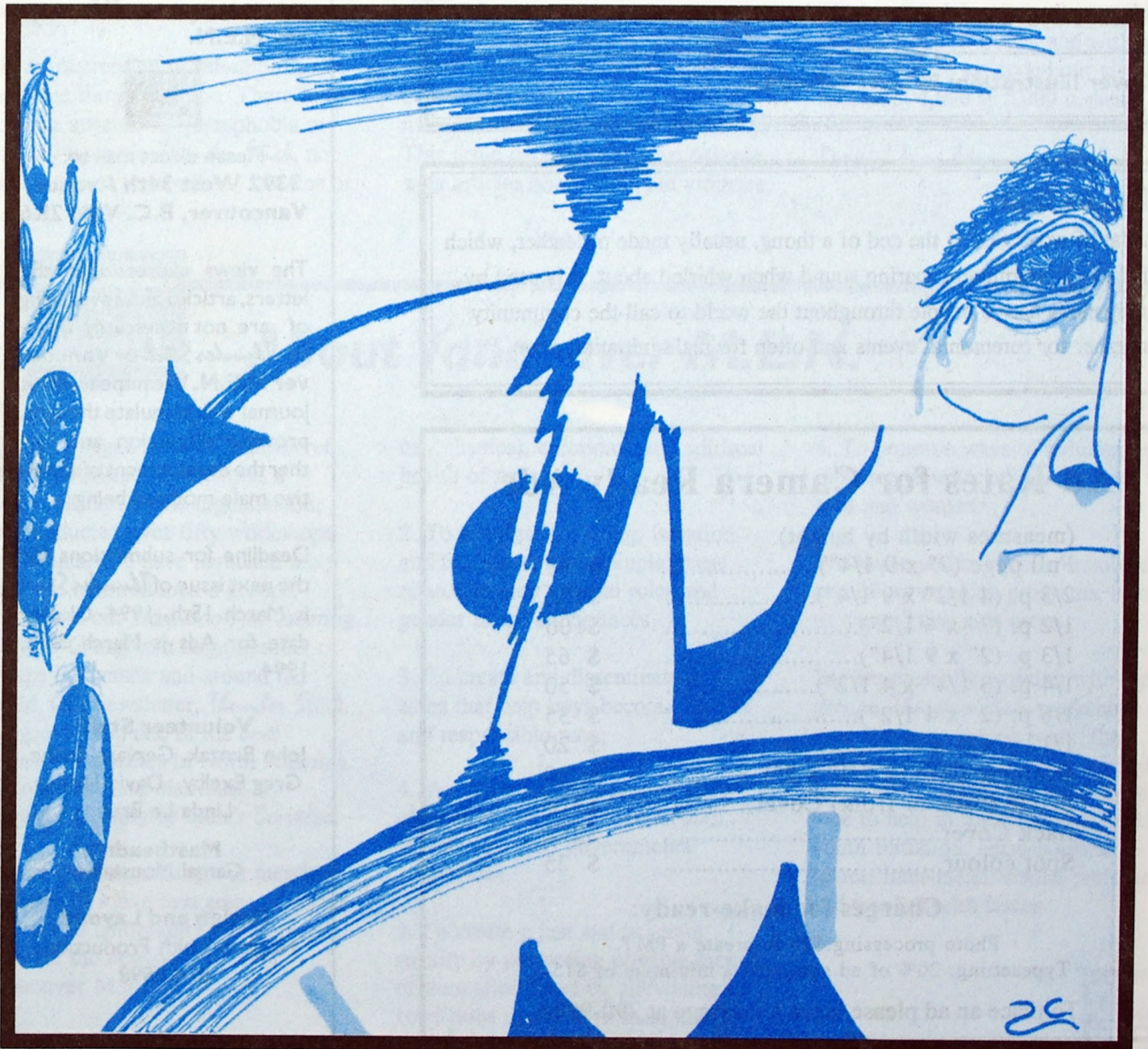


Thunder Stick

The Journal of Vancouver M.E.N.



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Cover Illustration: By Scott Carruthers

Thunder Stick:

a slat of wood tied to the end of a thong, usually made of leather, which makes an intermittent roaring sound when whirled about. It is used by indigenous native people throughout the world to call the community together for ceremonial events and often for male initiation rites.

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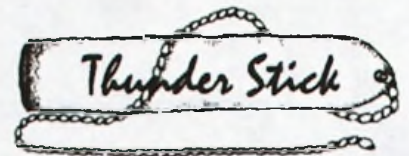
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Winter, 1994

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Thunder Stick is a publication of the Vancouver Men's Evolution Network (M.E.N.). Further information is available by calling (604) 290-9988. This number will provide updated event news and the opportunity to direct a message to any aspect of Vancouver M.E.N.



Please direct mail to:

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The views expressed in the letters, articles and advertising of are not necessarily those of *Thunder Stick* or Vancouver M.E.N. We hope that this journal will stimulate thought, provoke discussion and further the development of a positive male mode of being.

Deadline for submissions for the next issue of *Thunder Stick* is March 15th, 1994. Closing date for Ads is March 30th, 1994.

Volunteer Staff:

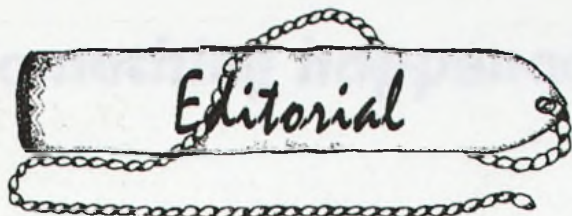
John Brozak, Gervase Bushe,
Greg Exelby, David Hanley,
Linda Le Brun

Masthead:

Gamal Moustafa

Design and Layout:

Haggart-Smith Productions
874-0598



What's happening between the Men's Movement and the "Gay Men's Movement"? Peter Raeside, a columnist for the *Globe and Mail* asked me recently. After a long pause I noted that there was a statement under the fifth purpose of Vancouver MEN which said:

We are looking for ways to break down the barriers between men of different races and sexual orientations.

But an expression of intention is not the same thing as action. There have been no articles on homophobia or any gay issues in *Thunder Stick*, nor have we ever received any articles or

letters. There are gay men reading this magazine and occasional announcements for events for gay men. Is it time for this state of affairs to change? *Thunder Stick* invites letters, articles, ideas and volunteers to come forward to create a substantial response to Peter Raeside's question.

Our regular readers will note the shift in emphasis with this issue of *Thunder Stick* as we move to emphasize more community issues. We have spoken before about the necessity of balance between the inner work of men and our work in the community. This issue demonstrates that balance with articles about men and violence,

circumcision and sexual abuse as community issues, and the interview with Michael Meade and an article about ritual versus process work as inner work issues. There are also a couple of poems from inmates from the men's group at Kent prison. The articles by Carruthers and Winklemans represent our bias for personal stories by local men.

Thunder Stick is continuing to grow, again we are 32 pages, and with this issue we have expanded our circulation from 4,000 to 5,000 copies.

David Hanley



About Vancouver M.E.N.

Since we began in 1990 Vancouver Men's Evolverment Network, a registered non-profit organization, has conducted over fifty workshops and events. We have launched more than one hundred men's groups, distributed our *Handbook for Starting a Men's Group* to a large number of groups in Canada and around the world. Our newsletter, *Thunder Stick*, has grown into one of the best 'men's' magazines in North America. We organize and distribute an *Annual Directory of Men's Services*.

We are now expanding our mandate. We wish to move into areas of social justice and community development. Here are the new objectives of Vancouver M.E.N.:

1. To promote the social, psychological,

cal, physical, emotional and spiritual health of men.

2. To alleviate suffering, isolation and the sense of meaninglessness related to men's social roles and gender based experiences.

3. To create and disseminate processes that help boys become mature and responsible men.

4. To challenge the negative stereotyping of men in the media and social, legal and governmental institutions.

5. To create a just and peaceful society by promoting positive models of masculinity and by alleviating the conditions that lead to male alienation, suicide and violence.

6. To promote ways of reducing male violence as inflicted against both men and women.

We invite you to become involved in one of our ongoing programs, or help us expand into new areas.

We are presently working with men's groups, *Thunder Stick*, workshops and special events, prison work, the Wisdom Council and male spirituality. We are looking for a few good men to help in the following areas; youth initiation, socio-political issues, inter-racial, sexual preference, and men's health issues.



Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor

There is a shift I see in today's society. Perhaps it is just a shift in myself. But I am like a grain of sand, and the colour of the beach depends on every grain of sand. The shift I see is the movement of greatness from the altar to the hearth. The common person is taking back his or her own sorrows, triumphs, births, deaths, Gods and Goddesses. Art is moving from the gallery walls (thankfully) to the quilt on my bed.

And so, I am not entirely sad to hear that Men's Movement seminar attendance is down, or that book sales have dropped. I like to think that it's a sign that we have taken the things we've learned in these explorations and have applied them to our daily lives, empowering ourselves and those around us.

Chopping firewood is like a prayer, and a home cooked meal is like nothing else.

We are all the possibility of powerful women and powerful men. And we are all the possibility of creating community.

Sincerely
Joanne Sale-Hook

Dear Editor,

A RESPONSE TO 'WHAT'S HAPPENING TO THE MEN'S MOVEMENT'

I read your article in the Summer Issue of *Thunder Stick* about *What's Happening to the Men's Movement* at


about the same time I was deeply absorbed in a book called *The Myth of Male Power; Why Men Are the Disposable Sex* by Warren Farrell, Ph.D. The suggestion of the writer of the article, Jayne Blanchard, backed by quotes from Robert Bly, Michael Meade, and Brian Muldoon all point in one direction for members of the men's movement; less time in workshops and more time on the streets working with the people; women, children, as well as other men.

To me this is a very interesting perception and a very timely article. If there was any question in my mind about what there is to do in those streets, it was laid out in bold print right in front of me in *The Myth of Male Power*. If anyone reading this report feels the need for some direction; where to apply some of the things you may have learned from the Men's Movement, I suggest you get a copy. Like an espionage thriller, it's a real page-turner. Each page, backed by an amazing amount of real life statistics, tells it like it really is; what's really happening to men in our culture - in the workplace, in the courts, in relationships, and on the battlefield.

The general intent of the book is not to deny the validity of the women's liberation movement but to bring our understanding of the treatment of men up to the same standard of awareness as women have done; to help us ensure that someday there will truly be equality in all facets of our lives. Dr. Farrell would like to see us move from "Stage 1" men to "Stage 2"; a necessity in order to bring the sexes together on equal footing.

For many years, so it says on the jacket cover, Dr.

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Something happened . . .

by Jack Nittel

*For all the Hollow Men,
those with an aching place of Emptiness,
there is one constant: an Innocence was betrayed,
a Childhood wilted before it bloomed*

We are the hollow men. Something was taken from us when we were very young and we cannot replace it. We try to, but we can't.

We drink, we drug, we sex, we work, we run - we do everything we can to fill the emptiness inside of us, but it does not go away.

We live our lives set apart from everyone else, in some intangible way we are different but we do not know why. Mostly we yearn for intimacy, for a connection with another person, with God perhaps, with something - we do not know what it is, but we are empty in a place where others seem full.

This I know: something happened.

We search through the brief glimpse of memories for clues that can tell us why we feel the way we feel. Why we've done the things we have. Why our lives are so empty; why we are so afraid. Why we have such rage. But the memories are often elusive and rare and we are left only with fragments stored in our senses: a snatch of a song playing on the radio, the smell of an unwashed body, the feel of cold linoleum.

A 32-year old man remembers a night when he was 10 years old. It is after midnight and the stars are out and he is burying his blood-stained underwear in the backyard. But he does not remember how it happened,

how he got there. He remembers only that a man in a pick-up truck asked him if he wanted a ride home from school.

His father was never there, working in camps, earning money, being a man. When the boy's father was home, he was drunk. The boy liked the attention from the man in the truck. The truck smelled of hay and rye whisky. Then there is nothing. It is as if nine hours were erased from his life.

He remembers telling only one person, a friend of his five years later. They were sitting in a playground and the friend laughed and asked if he would give him a blow job.

He kept the secret after that. It was not safe. If you are raped by a man, you must be queer. If you are raped by a woman you got lucky.

This I know. I am a hollow man. A year ago I woke up choking. Some thing was rammed in my throat; I could feel it. When I was fully awake and panting for breath, my wife touched my shoulder and asked me what was wrong.

Some of us learned to cope, to survive. We split off from some part of ourselves and bury it deep. We make a pact to keep the secret, for there are family fictions to maintain, shame and guilt to hide. And there are the warnings not to tell.

But sometimes we do, and some times we don't survive. "Mom," says an eight-year-old boy. "I don't want aunty

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Men, Women, & Violence!

by David Shackleton

In September, 1992 I listened to an address by Ms. Pat Marshall, Co-chairperson of the Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women. I didn't take advantage of an opportunity to question or comment at the end of her talk. Not only was I angry (and therefore unbalanced), I was afraid to speak because I feared the vulnerability of being politically incorrect. Having reflected on the issues, I now feel able to comment in a more balanced way - and strong enough to tolerate some political judgment.

Ms. Marshall described how her panel had toured Canada and listened to submissions on the issue of violence against women. She recounted many stories of victims. None of these stories shed any light on the motives of the perpetrators. No analysis of root causes was presented or, apparently, sought. The conclusion of the panel, only one member of which was a man, was that the judicial system was far too tolerant of male violence against women; their recommendation was to raise penalties and use the slogan "Zero Tolerance".

The issue of violence *is* appalling; we urgently need a solution. The thinking of Ms. Marshall and her panel is clearly in today's political mainstream on this issue. However, their approach (and the political mainstream's) is both sexist and unjust, and serves to perpetuate rather than cure the problem. Strong words - let me back them up.

On occasion I have found myself clamouring, "But women commit violence too," and have then got into arguments over statistic and their interpretation. I have finally understood where in me this cry is coming

from...

I am not arguing that women perpetrate as many acts of physical violence as men, but rather that there is something very unsavoury behind our need to classify men as perpetrators and women as victims, with only minor, insignificant exceptions. At root I believe this allows women to assume the high moral ground of righteous anger, and men the low ground of guilty abusers. And this polarization is itself both sexist, in that it reinforces gender stereotypes, and dangerous in that it mitigates against a serious introspection by either gender into the ways that they participate in the cultural pattern of violence.

For violence is a holistic phenomenon, with roots deep in our cultural assumptions, beliefs and expectations. Removing it from our landscape will also be a holistic exercise. Women as well as men will have to discover within themselves the ways in which their unconscious needs and motivations cause them to participate in the repetition of this pattern. For example, adult violence is directly related to childhood experience, and parenting is the responsibility of both father and mother. Understanding the ways that we as parents contribute to this pattern is not easy. As psychiatrist Alice Miller says:

"The assertion that men are solely responsible for conditions in today's world does just as little to expose and combat the presence of evil, destructive rage, violence, and perversion as does the demonization of women. Both sexes have always contributed to the genesis of the forces of evil. Mothers as well as fathers have considered it their duty to punish

their children and have used their children to satisfy their own ambitions and other needs. Every aggressive reaction on the child's part to this abuse was suppressed, and this suppression laid the foundation for destructive behaviour in adulthood. . . . When punishment is held up as proof of love, children are filled with confusion, which bears bitter fruit later in life. If these children become involved in politics, they continue the work of destruction initiated with them in childhood, and they camouflage it by taking on the role of savior just as their parents did before them. Both Stalin and Hitler claimed that they wanted only to do good. Murder was simply the necessary means to good. This ideology was passed on to them by both parents." [emphasis in original] [1]

One thing we can say with certainty is that blinding ourselves with a prejudice that this is a male issue - that men are guilty and women innocent victims - can only work against a genuine understanding, and therefore a genuine solution. And indeed, if we are firmly, emotionally attached to the notion that it is polarized in this way, as most women and men seem to be (my experience, not a calibrated result), then we make ourselves part of the problem, rather than part of the solution.

The great attraction of polarization is the simplification it offers: it allows a huge reduction in the conceptual complexity of the issue. But the simplicity is artificial, an abstraction constructed by leaving out much that is significant. A solution built on an abstraction may be very satisfying emotionally (for example, revenge), but it will fail to deliver the resolu-

tion, the genuine change we imagine. Our unwillingness to penetrate to the heart of the matter will turn against us, and since we have not "solved" anything, the pattern will repeat. It is in this way that I believe the current, polarized thinking about violence in our society is simply perpetuating the problem.

Let me confess my own attraction to a polarization: that "polarizers" are wrong, guilty, and that those who do not polarize are dealing honestly with the issues. There is some of that feeling in my argument above, and it, too, is an abstraction, an oversimplification. It represents my own moral high ground, my "superiority", and inevitably, it turns me into a polarizer too. That, of course, was the source of my own anger during Ms. Marshall's address, and it directs me to the personal work that I need to do, for here I am also part of the

problem.

So where does this all end? With my willingness to heal myself fully. As much as there remain unhealed parts of me, I will project them out into the world, seeing guilt which demands control and punishment instead of errors which call for healing. And I will aggravate rather than alleviate the problem I wish to solve.

Political and legal action is necessary, of course, but only if it flows from a balanced part of me. In this way I do as much real good as can possibly be done. And I must strenuously avoid acting when in the grip of anger, guilt, or fear, times when I am certain to have distorted and polarized my thinking. This is how I avoid doing harm. It's not very glamorous, but if we want real change, I believe there is no other way.

I am encouraged at the direction that the men's movement is taking. Growing numbers of men are working hard on their own healing, taking responsibility for their own growth, and avoiding blaming society, patriarchy or women for their situation. I am immensely pleased that there is no significant movement labelled "masculist", seeking to remake the world in its image. To heal is to make whole (the words have the same root), and it is ludicrous to believe that this might be pursued by dividing ourselves into camps for the purpose of assigning blame.

References: 1. *The Untouched Key - Tracing Childhood Trauma in Creativity and Destructiveness*, by Alice Miller pp 147-149.

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Peace of Mind, Peace on Earth

MICHAEL MEADE

INTERVIEWED BY MICHAEL BERTRAND

When generativity, creativity, generosity, and the capacity to embrace life dry up, the Water of Life has gone underground. At such times, the earth becomes arid, life becomes devoid of meaning, the ground of culture cracks and splits, and gaps develop among peoples and between people and nature. Only water can bring the pieces back together, awaken seeds hidden in the ground, and enliven the parched Tree of Life.

This quote from the jacket of Michael Meade's courageous and engrossing book, *Men and the Water of Life: Initiation and the Tempering of Men*, effectively challenges us to make the journey to the sources of that water, and to come back renewed into the culture.

Meade, one of the truest and most respected voices in the 'men's movement', with his great wealth of stories, poems, and insight from working with thousands of men over the last 12 years, will be in Vancouver March 4 and 5. See ad on the back cover for details.

In the following interview, conducted by Michael Bertrand in December, Meade shares some of his thoughts on the need for men's work, and explains what the *Water of Life* could be.

to men who are interested in doing work together with other men, work on themselves? There may be many men reading this magazine who haven't really done any 'men's work' yet and who are thinking about it. But as we've talked about, lately it seems that men have been falling away from being interested in it for various reasons: because they read something negative about it and dismissed it, or they didn't know how to approach it, or they didn't think it was for them or they don't have the time, or all those things. Yet it's certainly clear to me that it's totally necessary that men continue to do some work and more work on looking at who they are and how to be wholly themselves, and that this work has to be done to a great extent with other men.

A One of the first things to realize, or maybe one of the first ways to look at it is that throughout the history of human culture until modern times, groups of men have worked together doing what is now called inner work—working on aspects of their inner lives as well as how they connect to other people and community in general. Any culture that you study will usually have private time and ritual time where men on the one hand and women on the other hand gather separately.

that women and men see the world differently, experience the work through biological, emotional and mental differences. (Though somewhere in the deeper parts of a person's life these things are similar and even the same, you know, the deeply shared emotions and deeply universal ideas are the same.) So that it is most common throughout human history and throughout the world for women to do certain aspects of their personal and spiritual growth and sustenance as a separate group from men, and visa versa.

Now, when those, I think very common human experiences and ideas are looked at in contemporary times, you get a completely different situation. There's a fear of these separations, probably because culturally we are so severely separated to begin with that it seems like adding one more separation is just adding to the burden of people. That's, I think, one problem.

The second problem in that throughout history, men when they function as a separate group have often got involved in wars and attacks and various greedy exploits, so women often fear men going into those separate groups. So, I think, any groups of men that are going to do serious inner work and serious community work have to make some kind of demonstration of a connec-

Q What would you like to be saying

I think the underlying conviction is

tion to the beautiful and the deeply human in order to ally the fears of women and people in general. And that again has been a traditional characteristic of well intentioned men's groups throughout the world and throughout history. There always has been some expression of beauty along with the work. As a matter of fact, it is one of the main purposes of doing that work.

I also think that there was a period where the media grabbed a hold of a very simplistic view of what this was about and on the one hand, held it up so that everybody could see it and on the other hand, encouraged tearing it apart. And I think that's often how the main stream media works.

One result was that people who hadn't had a deep experience of it or a close connection to it were, I think, very quickly driven away from it. So, from another point of view, what we've been calling men's work is back to where it was four or five years ago - quietly doing its work the way people work in their gardens and the way people work away at projects in their houses and the way people work away in their studios producing art for personal or public display.

Q Now, the next question that comes to mind is what stops men from doing the work of listening to their souls or listening to the opening of the road they should be taking to... You quoted: "Part of the reasons to live is to find out who you must be."

A In the book when I'm talking about finding out who a person must be, I'm talking about a very difficult

struggle in that it turns out that a person is very rarely who their family thought they were or should be. And also that a person turns out not to be who their ideal fantasies of themselves tended to be. Strangely enough the person turns out to have a built-in purpose and aim in life. At least that's how I see, and that's how most cultures throughout time have seen it.

Another modern idea has been that a person is a blank slate on which culture and family write the story of that person. That's a new idea and it kind of denies the much older and much more widespread knowledge of people, which is that each person is born with an innate purpose; not a completed personality, but certain seeds that are destined to grow out of that person.

Strangely enough, it turns out that what living is about is staying in contact with the seeds and the ground that those seeds are in and watering and nurturing and weeding around those seeds and what grows out of them. Again, a person is like a self revelation as well as a revelation to those around them. There's a lot of surprise in it. Just the way anything that grows has to make its way through the ground and around rocks and sometimes comes out a little too early in the season or a little too late in the season and has to deal with inclement or disturbing weather, that turns out to be what a person's life is like. It's inherently difficult and it's made out of both struggle and surprise and shock.

In the modern conception of things, everybody talks about individuality

and yet there's a kind of denial that the seeds of this individuality are there right from the beginning. It's very easy to get confused and there's not a lot of encouragement for really going through that struggle. And one of the old functions of community was to lend that kind of ground of support so that the individual could struggle their way into the light and be seen by the whole community as well as to experience the spreading out of their own soul and the wings of their own spirit.

As I write about it in the book, because we've gone through this elaborate denial of death, we have lost this sense of community which is always associated with a knowledge of death. Community forms around the knowledge not just of the individual spirit of each person, which you hear some talk about these days, but it also forms around the knowledge that each individual in the community will die. That's guaranteed, as they say. It's one of the few things that we know. So, in modern culture, when death is denied one of the dark threads that weaves a community disappears and when the community begins to fall apart, what happens is that individuals can't stand up as straight. People individually individuate in contrast to the group; when the group is not solid, neither are the individuals.

Q Right, so one of the reasons for men's work is to try to recreate some sense of community, so that there is some support for people to find out what are the reasons that they're alive.

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ADVENTURES IN *Living* SEMINARS

with DRUCILLA DESABRAIS

TELEPHONE: 465-6622



Drucilla Desabrais

creates and facilitates *Adventures in Living Seminars*. Drucilla's approach to her work is refreshing. She focuses on truth and simplicity and facilitates with warmth, compassion and a delightful sense of humour. Her work is vibrant and dynamic and her life exemplifies her commitment to her own growth and her work.

"I believe that in most of us there is an inner child that has never been acknowledged. This work is about connecting with that intuitive part of ourselves that was shut down at a young age. I believe that by validating the inner self we can move into creating what we truly desire in our lives. Only by letting go of our illusions and the blaming of others will we be able to take full responsibility for ourselves and our relationships."

SPIRITUAL AWAKENINGS - Awaken yourself to your own inner spirituality by connecting deeply with who you are and attuning to your inner wisdom. This one day workshop is for men and women and can be the beginning of an exciting spiritual journey.

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MAN ALIVE - Exclusively for men. Do you want to take a look at what our roles as men and women mean, the illusions you hold onto, your body issues, your sexuality? The focus of this workshop is falling in love with ourselves and accepting our bodies and our sexuality.

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METAMORPHOSIS

Pushing back periphery fog,
with a lance head dipped in hope,
I search the caverns of my mind
for that with which to cope.

In denizenized jungle behind these walls,
of rabid fang and taloned claw,
to rip and tear the unaware,
stalks a thriving primal law.

Gnarled and torn are the corpses
which lie strewn upon the floor.
Once hopes and lively dreams of mine
now dead and are no more.

I search my mind for tenderness,
sown there when as a child,
I did not know of the rage below;
now warped in vintage bile.

But until I've found this treasure,
once me before my sin,
reach not out to touch my soul,
for this law now lives within...

by Jordan Gallant



Peter Sinclair

DISCOVERING COURAGE A GROUP FOR MEN

"The source is actually the heart of courage within us. As men and as a movement of men seeking to grow in awareness, power, dignity, and strength, we need to find ways to touch the heart of courage within ourselves and awaken to our own power. The discovery of the heart of courage within is the principle task facing men today. Without this discovery, men run the risk of remaining at an infantile stage of self-absorption and ego-neediness. With the uncovering of the heart of courage, men can take their place in the world . . ."

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Decision to circumcise is difficult

by Neil Chethik

I know it's wrong to take a newborn child, strap him down so he cannot move his arms or legs, and then, without anaesthesia or a compelling medical reason, slice off a perfectly healthy and functional piece of an extremely sensitive body part.

I know it's wrong. Yet I still may do it to my child.

That's the power of the cultural pressure to circumcise infant males. These days, many American parents barely give circumcision a second thought. Sometime during the pregnancy, they decide that Junior should look like Daddy, and so they give the go-ahead to "get it over with" before the baby leaves the hospital.

As a writer on male issues, however, I bumped into the other side of the circumcision debate long before my wife became pregnant. And now, two months before delivery, still not certain if it's a boy, I find myself torn between my instinct to protect my child from physical pain and the pressure to conform.

The decision to circumcise wouldn't be so difficult if there was a decisive medical reason to do it.

While religious and ritual circumcision started thousands of years ago, it wasn't until the mid-19th Century that U.S. doctors began doing medical circumcisions, proclaiming them a cure for masturbation, laziness, alcoholism and a host of other "ills".

Nonsense, the American Academy of Pediatrics finally said in 1971, when it deemed circumcision medically unnecessary. By then, however, about 80 percent of male infants in the United States were having their foreskins removed (compared to about 20 percent in the rest of the world).

Studies in the past few years have found that circumcision may reduce urinary tract infections and some sexual transmitted diseases, but the Pediatrics Academy

still does not recommend the procedure routinely. Neither does baby doctor Benjamin Spock, former Surgeon C. Everett Koop or TV-radio doctor Dean Edell.

Why not? Because, they claim, it's a painful and unnecessary operation. In most cases, anaesthesia is not used because it can cause complications.

Their argument goes something like this: If we removed all healthy body parts because they might someday become diseased, we'd be routinely pulling healthy teeth to prevent decay, amputating healthy breasts to reduce cancer. We don't do these things because teeth and breasts serve a purpose.

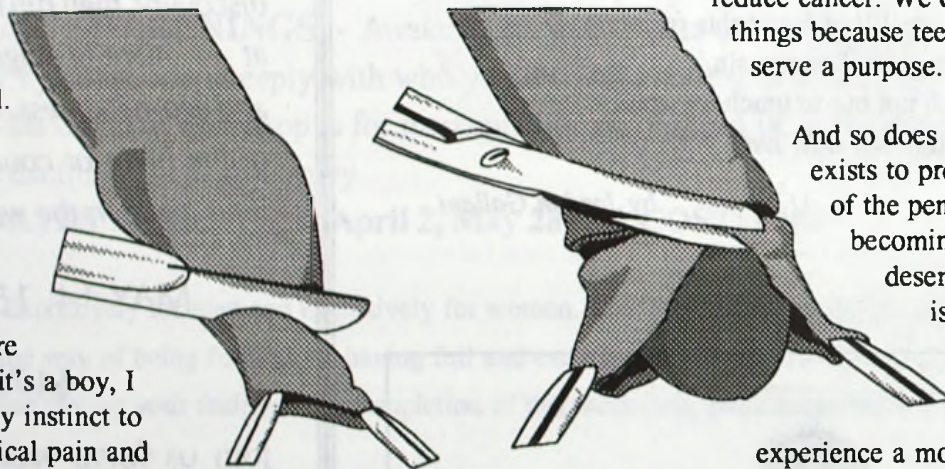
And so does the foreskin. It exists to protect the head of the penis from becoming injured or desensitized. There is even evidence that men with foreskins experience a more intense sexual response.

So why would I even consider circumcision for my son?

Because, frankly, the pressure's on. Our doctor recommends that a father and son "look the same." Almost all of our friends have circumcised their sons. And, while circumcisions in the United States have steadily decreased in the last two decades, most Jews still carry out the practice, even if they don't do it in the traditional ceremony. (I'm Jewish; my wife is not.)

So going ahead with circumcision would seem to be the easier route for us. Yet if there's one thing we've learned about parenting, even before the birth of our first child, it is this: Don't confuse our needs with the needs of our child.

Circumcising might be easier for us, but what about him? Is it really "no big deal," or does it have subtle, long lasting effects on a boy's psyche? Is being different



from one's father really damaging, or can problems be overcome by openly discussing sexual issues? And what's worse: losing out on an initiation into a religious tradition, or losing a body part without one's consent? [they decided not to circumcise their son]

There are no right answers to these questions. No study has been developed that can isolate the impact of circumcision on a boy's future life.

But it seems to me that if my wife and I choose to circumcise our son, we should do so only after carefully exploring these questions ourselves, and not simply because it's the easiest thing to do. ●

Editors Note: Neil and his wife decided against the circumcision their son.

Neil Chethik writes a weekly syndicated column called

VoiceMale which now appears in 25 newspapers in the U.S.A. PO Box 8071, Lexington, KY 40533

Men:

If you are "different" from your father or your son, has that been a problem in any way?

Also, are you resentful because you either are or aren't circumcised?

Women:

How did you feel when you had your son circumcised?

Write to *Thunder Stick*
to continue this dialogue.



SOME NEW BOOKS FOR MEN AT BANYEN . . .



SOUL MATES: *Honoring the Mysteries of Love and Relationship* by Thomas Moore, \$17.50 paperback is new from the author of *Care of the Soul*, one of last year's surprise best-sellers. Also in cloth (for connoisseurs) at \$33.50, it's a subtle evocation of the soul, which thrives on intimacy, attachment and involvement. Rich and nourishing fare. His *Care of the Soul* is now in paperback at \$16.00. A 6-tape set of his talks is also available. It's called *Soul Life* (\$77.00).

HAMMERING HOT IRON: *A Spiritual Critique of Bly's Iron John* by Charles Upton, \$18.50 paperback. This is a rare work that raises important questions, draws vital distinctions, and elevates discourse within the spiritual community on the Men's Movement, Jungian psychology, archetypal and mythological studies, and polytheistic religions.

MOTHERS, SONS & LOVERS: *How a Man's Relationship with His Mother Affects the Rest of His Life*, by Michael Gurian, \$17.00 paperback is new from the author of the highly regarded *The Prince and the King* (also in paper at 18.50) which was on healing the father-son wound. His new one is already quite popular. "A wonderful book! I couldn't put it down. Anyone who wants a highly readable, insightful look at the mother-son relationship should take a deep breath and jump into this one." —John Lee

BEING A MAN: *A Guide to the New Masculinity*, by Patrick Fanning & Matthew McKay, \$16.95 paperback. A thoughtful and inspiring book that takes the men's movement out of the clouds and down to earth. Practical advice for every man concerned with achieving a sense of personal integrity.

MASCULINITY: *Identity, Conflict and Transformation* by Warren Sternberg, Ph.D. \$19.50, paperback. From a New York Jungian analyst comes this new exploration of what it means to be a man; going beneath conventional models to gain an understanding of masculinity that includes traditional masculine qualities along with recognition and acceptance of the anima, or man's inner feminine.

MEN AND THE WATER OF LIFE: *Initiation and the Tempering of Men* by Michael Meade, \$26.00 in cloth is still the single most intensely beautiful and challenging work written for men. Multi-levelled, magnificently metaphorical, storyteller Meade's weaving of the risks, stages and rewards of ripening and mature manhood is a revelation, a work of teaching art, and a friendly companion in these dark and wintry times.

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Q U E S T

Counselling, Evaluation & Consultation Services

EVENTS CALENDAR

The following is a list of events for the first quarter of the new year. If you would like more information regarding any of these events, or would like to register, please phone 875-1629. If you do not speak to me directly, leave your name, address (with postal code), phone number and the event you are interested in, and I will call you back and/or send the information you requested.

Three Part Presentation Series. All presentations will be both informational and experiential, from 5-6:30 p.m., for a donation of \$5.00 - \$10.00 and will be held at 1011 Commercial Drive. Bring a pillow to sit upon.

#1 Symbols and Reflections of Empowerment. Sunday January 16th, learn how to expand beyond consensus reality, to a place of sacredness, gratitude, and co-creation.

#2 Relationships-Can't live with em, Can't live without em. Sunday January 23, learn to see your relationships as a path to psychological and spiritual healing. "Only in this way can we truly love."

#3 Paradox and Healing. Sunday January 30th, reconnect with your ability to heal yourself as we explore the immense wisdom of our own body.

January 16th, **Beyond the 12 Steps**, a process group, 7:30-9:30 p.m. (open and ongoing)

January 25th, **Introduction to the Men's Movement**, 7-9 p.m.

January 26th, **Introduction to the Men's Movement, Part II "The Experience"**, 7 - 10 p.m.

January 30th, **"A Gathering of Men."** A workshop for men who are ready to walk their talk
10 am-2 p.m.

February 2nd, **The Men's Movement and Addiction Treatment**, 7-9 p.m.

February 6th, **Fatherhood**, a series of four meetings for men committed to being who they were really meant to be, 5-7 p.m.

February 9th, **How to Create a Support, Discussion, or Therapy Group**, 7-9 p.m.

February 12th, **The Mind/Body Connection**, a full day of creative and genuine expression.

February 16th, **Return to Empowerment**, a series of six meetings for people committed to moving past "needs" and "expectations", 6-8 p.m.

February 26th, **"A Gathering of Men, Part II"**. A workshop for men who are courageous enough to be themselves. 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

March 2nd, **Relationships, Can't live with em, Can't live without em.** 7-9 p.m. at Serenity Books on Broadway.

March 6th, **Parenthood**, a series of six meetings for men and women committed to loving their children, 5-7 p.m.

3538 Copley Street, Vancouver, B.C. V5N 5B2 (604) 875-1629

RITUAL GROUP VS. PROCESS GROUP

by Evan Brett

A few months ago I read in *Thunder Stick* an interview with Tom Daly in which for the first time I came across the expression "Process Group". Daly was making a distinction between "ritual" men's work and "process" men's work. Process work was something I was familiar with because his definition sounded similar to what we do in our Langley Men's Group, (although I'm not too sure that "process" is the right word). We take turns facilitating, while we work on our past, our fears, men's issues, sex, addictions, belief systems, and all of those things that most of us are now familiar with - often just called "sharing". But a great deal of the motivation behind this sharing is the need to develop a sense of trust and respect for a group of individuals. Ritual work on the other hand was not something I knew a great deal about - drums and ceremonial practices. But according to Daly they are quite different approaches and almost impossible to combine.

Reading this interview I didn't see any reason why one type of work couldn't be incorporated in with the other, even if I personally didn't have any particular ambition to get involved in ritual work. In fact, I had expressed such a reluctance about this often enough during our Langley Cross Rogues Meetings that it had become pretty much a standing joke.

Eventually, however, I was put to the challenge. Cory Bretz and John Solano contacted us and relayed their plans for a wilderness weekend on Passage Island. The price was right - \$75. Four of our members found the time and the inspiration to attend. At 9:00 am Friday morning we met

Cory, John and a bunch of other guys at Horseshoe Bay and headed off on what looked to be a bit of an adventure.

The purpose of these comments is not to discuss what happened on that weekend nor to recapture the experience. I have put these thoughts to writing to help me clarify just how ritual work really seems to be based on a different belief system than "process" work, and to help me gain an understanding of the distinction between the two.

I now believe that Tom Daly was right. These two approaches to men's work are quite different, in truth I can find very little common ground. More importantly, I now have a better comprehension of why I have favoured one over the other.

1. Ritual work seems to be based on a premise that A) aboriginal people had a clearer understanding of the origin (or origins) of power; Mother Earth, Father Sky and the Four Directions seem to be primary sources. And b) that all men of those times past were great believers in such mysticism.

Whereas it may be true that the majority of men today seldom question such things as the source of their power (and as a result often go astray) it was probably equally quite true that the men of earlier times were just as deviant and usually left such ideology to the shamans and chiefs. They, like us, were too busy running down their dinner. However, for today's men, at least among those who do think about such things, I believe the focus has shifted. Today we tend to believe that the source of

our power lies within. Nothing I have seen of ritual work led me to believe otherwise.

2. Another oddity that I still can't get a grip on is that ritual work seems to say that there is such a thing as a quick fix. I don't suppose that anyone attending our weekend on Passage Island really believed that they were going to emerge a changed, more powerful man. But if that wasn't the implication behind our weekend, what were we doing there? What was the appeal? Spend a weekend in nature, call on external powers, beat a drum, swear, get initiated and what is supposed to happen? Hopefully something positive.

Whatever it is, this approach is definitely in opposition to the support group method which says basically that it took us 20, 30 or 50 years to become the particular version of a man that we are. It may almost take that long again to become a different one; there are no quick turn-arounds.

3. Perhaps in an attempt to purge ourselves and start anew, I'm not sure why, ritual work asks that we bare our innermost fears, cry out our shame, our anger and our sorrow to a group of strangers; men that we may never see again. In contrast, support work asks that we share our dark side with those who we know from experience will not judge; those who we trust, who will support us, offer feed-back (if asked), and who will be there for us in the following weeks/years.

4. I keep hearing that Rites of Initiation are something we sorely

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A Yes. Once a person reaches puberty, a person begins to change rapidly and radically and a person is both emotionally, spiritually and physically pulled into their first kind of group definition, which is one of the gender groups and then it continues from there - a person usually keeps defining and refining, struggling to find out who they are. Culturally, we're stuck even with that first separation nowadays; it's not understood. Everybody is afraid, as I said earlier, of the separations because we don't have a coherent community, so any separation seems like it might threaten everybody.

Q One of the themes of your book and one of the themes of the workshop you're going to be doing here is the water of life. Would you give us a definition of what the water of life is and why we need it so badly?

A Following those other ideas...The water of life is an image from a story, but it's also an image that appears in many languages, many cultures. It refers to this very deep water of regeneration. It's particularly needed, and people begin to remember that there is such a thing and go looking for it, exactly when everything is falling apart.

The water of life is healing water that brings everything back together - it's connected to the deep emotions so that when people are having that feeling of sorrow for all of the disasters in the world, when people fall into that kind of deep well of sorrow that you can feel anytime these days, they're already tasting some of that sad water that people share deeply. Interestingly enough though, the deep love of humanity and the feeling that everyone is connected one to another is also part of that same deep water.

What I'm trying to say in the book is that a person needs to sip and taste

and dwell by the streams of these very deep waters of the psyche and the human heart occasionally in their life or else they feel either numb and dead or they go kind of mad, in the sense of feeling completely disconnected, completely isolated, unbefriended, threatened from all directions and alone. So, this water of life connects people through the depths of emotions and through whatever kind of spiritual awarenesses that people have glimpses and occasions of. I'm using this old image of the water of life to suggest those things.

In the case of men, one thing I'm saying is that until a man finds his way maybe more than once to these waters of life he doesn't know his own heart and, as a result, he's dangerous to himself and to others. The water of life is also an antidote to an excess of anger, rage, fear and numbness - all things which plague men especially in modern times.

Q I guess I'm still searching for



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DRUMMING WORKSHOP



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some very concrete examples of what exactly the water of life would be - is it getting in touch with emotions like grief or is it ecstasy - what is it in modern parlance?

A Those are good examples right there: The ecstatic sense that a person can have when they're imbued with the feeling that the spirit in them is alive and they suddenly feel how they are connected to the world of nature and the world of culture and to other people. And they're kind of imbued with love and a kind of sense of their inner vision of themselves and their own beauty and their own...all that kind of thing. That can be one aspect. The image is then one of tasting the water of life.

On the other hand too, when a person allows themselves to feel all the way into the sorrow of the world, the grief that is a necessary part of each person's life and, many people now believe, of each animal's life, then they are also drinking of this water of life.

What I write in the book is that part of a person's adult life is growing to the point where they can taste the depth of sorrow in the world and the heights of joy. William Blake said something to the effect that you can only handle as much joy as you handle sorrow. So, for some people at certain times this water of life is a taste of the joy of life that maybe they have not experienced since some few moments in childhood. For other people, it's the kind of falling all the way into the sorrow of the world and sipping at that depth of sorrow. Both are necessary; that's how the book takes its course. I call it the initiation by fire and the initiation by water.

Q You give another quote: "The cure for the condition of the soul is that which is most beautiful."

A One of the things I was trying to work on throughout the book was the wild and continuing increase of random violence in the modern

world. And I described in there a number of personal experiences that I had being in various places of danger and whatever, and finding out that the only antidote to violence is beauty, or in some cases you could say, art.

From my point of view and from the experience that I've had, the same force that erupts into violence - when it is trained, when it winds through the care of the community, when it is educated and nourished in certain ways - that same force is what we call the creative force that makes art and makes things of beauty, and makes people of beauty and makes moments of beauty for people. Each person carries within them this kind of force of life that can explode violently and do damage or can implode and do damage in the form of suicide or self destruction or self-destructive acts. That same force, when it is brought into the community, when it is held in meaningful relationships and so on, is what

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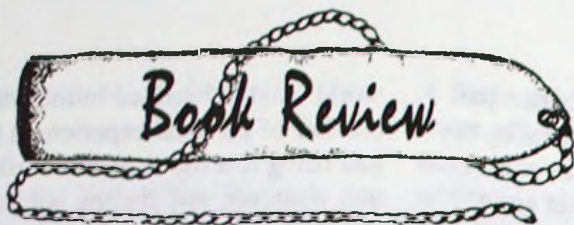
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KSHOP

AIR GUITAR WORKSHOP



by John Brozak

Beyond the Hero
by Allan Chinen
Jeremy Tarcher/Putmans and Sons
New York, New York

"The Trickster teaches men to laugh at themselves, to see humour in apparently tragic situations, and to experiment with life. Tricksters offer an alternative to the heroic and patriarchal paradigm of masculine power - the Trickster is the master of initiation in a rite of passage for mature men."- Allan Chinen

In Contrast Robert Moore writes;
"The Trickster uses his powers to destroy anything that looks to be establishing a creative order or attempting to follow the basic life enhancing rituals of initiation into a fuller and richer life."

These two statements illustrate the different points of view which one encounters regarding the Trickster.

Allan Chinen is the author of several books on the passage through mid-life. *Beyond the Hero* is his first book to focus on the male aspect of this journey. Allan's basic premise is that the Hero is a youthful archetype. As we age and experience life's disappointments and our own failings, we need a new metaphor to guide us. Chinen's answer is the Trickster.

According to Chinen the Trickster dates from the Paleolithic era of humankind's existence, and far antedates both the Mother Goddess and the Patriarchal Warrior-King. Patriarchal and warrior cultures are relatively recent, having risen perhaps less than 9,000 years ago. For most of human history - at least 25,000 years - men and women lived as hunter-gathers and were egalitarian and cooperative.

The Trickster is credited with having brought many gifts to humankind, among them, fire, language, medicines and essential foods. He is portrayed as a healthy example of well functioning male sexuality. In the Sufi

traditions he is known as Mulla Nasrudin. Prometheus, Maui, and Raven bore the gift of Fire. Hermes, Eshu, and Legaba are credited with bringing language and speech. In North America Coyote introduced many of the basic customs and rituals of the Native Americans.

Beyond the Hero discusses many aspects of the Trickster's history, but I intend to focus on only one of them, that of initiation. Before the advent of the warrior class, approximately 9,000 years ago, which arose to acquire and defend land needed for farming, ritual initiations were less cruel and harsh. To prepare boys to become warriors, mutilating initiations were introduced to force young men into the strenuous and dangerous way of the warrior, despite the boy's natural tendency to avoid pain and suffering. Simply stated, a warrior personality is not normal. The arduous mutilating nature of puberty rites reflects just how much effort is needed to inculcate and maintain the warrior's fierceness. Allan suggests that the spirit of the hunter-gatherer symbolized by the Shaman Trickster is a more natural, instinctual, genetic and primordial way, and I agree with him. How many men realize that in addition to the adult warrior male rites of passage is an equivalent rite for females, the clitorectomy?

Chinen's focus in this book is on males in mid-life. He believes that there are still many opportunities for heroic initiations but what is really needed are initiations for mature men. Without these mid-life initiations, older men remain stuck in heroic and patriarchal roles. Under the guidance of the Shaman-Trickster, men abandon the patriarch's patronizing attitude toward women.

My one frustration with this book is that Allan mentions that co-existent and equal to the Shaman-Trickster are what he calls the Divine Sisters. He offers no explanation or history about these beings whom he also calls the Wild Sisters. Perhaps that work awaits another book.

I recommend this book for all men who feel that they have completed the Heroic stage of their Journey and feel that they are ready for what lies beyond "happily ever after". ●

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lack in this culture. It seems to have something to do with the fact that since we no longer work with our fathers, we are no longer certain when we've reached manhood. In past generations and in other cultures, ceremonies were performed to mark that particular day.

Now, after observing some initiation rites, I realize that it may well be for good reason that we no longer perform such ceremonies. It seems to me that rituals such as hanging oneself from spikes thrust through the skin or loosing one's teenage foreskin was no more proof of manhood than getting a driver's licence, or having our first sexual experience is today. Manhood is not something we arrive at overnight. Not only does manhood happen at different times for different individuals, it is something we ease into over a long period. That realization alone seems to be the foremost reason why initiation rites are seldom performed anymore.

5. Finally and perhaps most importantly, ritual work seems to have risen to popularity as one more way of filling the spiritual void. Many men have realized that it

has become deadly to fill that void with drugs, booze, sex, or work. Turning to religion, we now understand, can lead to just as compulsive a behaviour as any of the former 'sins'. The mythopoetic movement, of which ritual work seems to be a major component, asks us to turn to myths and religious practices of the past while overlooking the fact that those practices may have been just as off the mark as our current religious practices.

No doubt there are fundamental spiritual truths running through all religious beliefs but, in my view, its the very ceremonializing of these truths that disguises their value and renders them useless. And to me that's what ritual work seems to do; disguise the truth. Praying to Father Sky is just as foreign to me as bowing to the East and pounding a drum during a makeshift aboriginal initiation ceremony, just as beneficial as yelling, "Oh Lord, I'm saved!" from the front row at some revival meeting.

There's no doubt in my mind that the void we all carry within us needs to be filled with some deeper understanding of the value of Spirit; The Force, God's Love, whatever name we give it. I can't agree to adopting the beliefs and ceremonies of other tribes, any more than I

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HEALING THE GENDER SPLIT

"An experience of compassion, forgiveness, and leadership"

As men and women we have been separate for too long. We've blamed each other for the rejection, betrayal, and abandonment we've felt, only to end up creating that which we fear the most--Separation. Don't you think it's time to Surrender to the vision that has been waiting to unfold in our hearts?

On February 19th, from 10am to 2pm, you are invited to help create a safe and sacred space, where together through the use of eastern, transpersonal, and sacred psychology, we will begin to bridge the separation of the genders. Cost is \$40.00. Call John L. Solano of Quest Counselling Services for details and registration.

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The Lone Ranger

By Tom Gamet - Two Years After *The Mastery*

When I was a child one of my favourite archetypical heroes was the Lone Ranger. When I look back the part I remembered the best was the scene at the end of each episode. There was always this gathering of people who had been the beneficiaries of his heroic and noble deeds talking amongst themselves about the Lone Ranger. At some point it's discovered that he is missing. Someone then looks out a window to witness him and his friend Tonto riding off in a cloud of dust. "Who was that masked man?" someone asks "Why that was the Lone Ranger", someone else replies.

What stands out for me here, is that the Lone Ranger never stuck around for any acknowledgement. I believe that this expression of "True Manhood" got indelibly stamped into my young impressionable mind. "A real man, a man of honour and goodwill, does not need to be acknowledged." It's clear to me now that up until November 11, 1991, when I took *The*

Mastery, I was acting on this information. In other words, being alone with my feelings was what was expected for a strong man.

More than anything else *The Mastery* is a direct confrontation with this fundamental lie. It calls to the surface a renewed look at issues of separation and isolation. The truth is, this point of view about manhood has cost me dearly for most of my adult life.

What *The Mastery* taught me was some basic skills around the giving and receiving of acknowledgement. Are you a man who is incapable of receiving love and appreciation from others? Are you in your own way another version of the Lone Ranger? If so I encourage you to turn yourself in. This workshop will give you permission to be touched and admired by others and ultimately re-acquaint yourself with your own unique brand of humanity.

So . . . what'll it be "*KEMOSABI*"? Are you willing to be seen on your journey?

Give yourself the gift of three days to discover and practice your full range of feelings and self expression in order to move beyond the limits you have imposed upon yourself.

For More Information about *The Mastery* call Hank Melanson 739-8494

can follow the rites and dogma of some fundamentalist Christian church. Spiritual enlightenment, if I may call it that, only comes about through a long, arduous process.

Perhaps that work is truly "process" work. And perhaps that is why I prefer to think of the work we do with the Langley Cross Rogues as 'support work' or 'trust work'. I think process work is between me and my God. And ritual work must be for somebody else, not me. ●



**UBC Continuing Studies
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The Deep Structure of the Self

**An Introduction to the Psychology of Robert Moore
(a program for both men and women)
with Keith Wilkinson, PhD**

6 Thursday evenings, February 10-March 17, 7-9 pm
\$120

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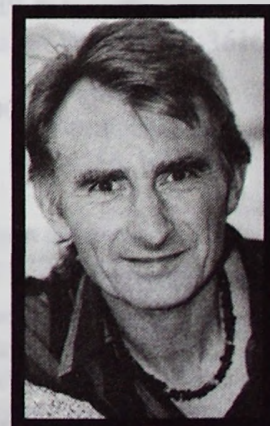
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Call **Harry Carr**
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Farrell was an advocate of women's rights, having written various books on the subject and speaking on their behalf all over the U.S. and Canada. It was only just recently that he was hit with a bit of a revelation and decided to step out of that role for a moment and take a serious look at what was happening with *men's* rights - or lack of them. The results are spelled out with eye-opening detail in his book. His hope is that, although both men and women will have a long struggle to overcome a belief system that makes men the "Disposable Sex", someday the understanding that results from discovering what this means will help us overcome the imbalance we face every day. Only then will men and women truly be able to work together equally for the betterment of all.

I think the book is still only hard cover and sells for about \$30. But pick it up soon. It will change the way you think. I guarantee it.

Evan Brett ●

to babysit me any more. She makes me sit on her lap. She climbs in bed with me."

"Don't be silly," says mom. "Your aunty loves you. She would never hurt you."

The eight-year-old boy knows something is wrong. It feels so bad. There is only one thing left for him to think. There is something wrong with him. He is flawed in some way. He gains 30 pounds in one year and when it still does not stop he runs away.

No one wants to hear what he says. He is a fat little runaway, nothing but trouble, and at 11 years old he dies of hypothermia, drunk in a snowy field.

This I know. For three years in junior high school I wore two pairs of underpants: long underwear and another pair of underpants folded around my rear end. I have told myself for 30 years, and with some humor, that I did it because I was skinny, but only this morning I realized it was a rationalization. I was no skinnier

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than any other gangly 16-year-old.

I did it because I wanted to protect myself. And so another piece of the jigsaw puzzle fits into a place as I reconstruct a childhood that I cannot remember. A childhood that was fragmented and blown apart in less than a day, perhaps in less than 10 minutes. I do not remember.

We are the hollow men and we litter the streets and jails and psychiatric units. No one will understand this, but we know the whys of the men who make such terrible headlines. It is obscene to weep for Clifford Olson: he is a monster perhaps beyond redemption. But once he was a little boy and something happened.

This I know. Sometimes I sit for hours, staring into nothing. I leave my body because I cannot stay in it. I learned this trick when I was very young and now, with even the smallest of stress, I am gone.

I am huddled in a bank of pillows with my five-year-old son and we are playing a game. I am the friendly wizard who lives in a secret forest hideaway and he has come for a visit.

Distribution List

You can pick up your copy of *Thunder Stick* at the following locations. We publish four times a year, mid January, April, July, & October.

Vancouver

Banyen Books
732-7912

The Serenity Shop
873-3533

Granville Book Co.
687-2213

Margaret Gabriel
Bookseller
738-BOOK

All My Relations
739-2144

Octopus Books East
253-0913

North Vancouver

The Serenity Shop
987-8726

McNews
984-9412

White Rock

Whitby's Bookstore &
Coffee House
536-3711

Sun Star Metaphysical
Centre
535-8099

New Westminster
Visions Book Store Ltd.
520-0047

Richmond
Serendipity's Backyard
275-1683

Coquitlam
Reflections Books
939-6000

Surrey
Phoenix Metaphysical
Books
584-7684

Langley
Black Bond Books
530-6757

Maple Ridge
Baba G Books
467-0998

Nanaimo
Spiritwood Books
753-2789

The story has taken on so many layers that he does not see his father any more, only the friendly wizard, and I take the opportunity to ask him questions.

"Are you happy little boy?"

"Yes, I am," he says.

"Where do you live?"

"On Salmonberry Road."

"Do you live with your mom and dad?" I ask.

"I live with my mom," he says. "But my daddy died."

My daddy died. I am here, but I am gone and it grieves me to my core that my sons must deal with something that happened to me 40 years ago.

We are the hollow men. A few of us, a very few, meet in rooms and workshops and tell our stories. The permutations of pain and betrayal are endless but the stories are all the same.

Here is one of them; here is all of them.

This I know. I am crying now. •

YOU WANT TO BE IN A MEN'S GROUP?

Who do you call? These men will help put you in touch with a new or already formed men's group in their area.

Lower Mainland:

Vancouver M.E.N. 290-9988

Vancouver Island:

Jim Richardson
383-7664

Fraser Valley:

(East of Surrey)

Evan Brett
534-0205

Fraser Valley:

(Men's Ritual Work)

Scott Carruthers
856-8524

Sunshine Coast:

David Evanson
886-9135

Northwest: Prince Rupert to Smithers:

Richard Wiener 632-6382

North Okanagan:

Winfield/Vernon

John Sherman 766-4825

South Okanagan:

Summerland to Okanagan Falls:

David Tauzer 496-5435

Kamloops to Clearwater:

Rob Riddle 554-3112

Prince George:

Ralph Wright 562-3616

Quesnel:

Arione Gabriel

Box 4456, V2J 3J4

Vancouver M.E.N. is looking for men to step forward to act as Regional Co-ordinators for men's groups in other parts of B.C. We'll help you to set up and cover the minor costs associated with providing this important community service.

► page 17

makes things of immense beauty in people's lives.

Q So, all hail rock 'n' roll?

A All hail anything that captures the attention of young people and brings them right into the flow of culture. Again, we suffer in this culture of excesses and separations that lack intention. There's a difference between a separation that has an intention in it and a separation that is just random, or as we nowadays fear, the separations that we now have between women and men. I think what's in the air between the two is primarily fear and envy. And then, if you look at the separation between the stages of life, there is an increasing amount of fear and envy between young people and old people.

Part of what I'm writing about is how to interfere with that, how to put

something in these gaping abysses between peoples, between races, between genders, between stage groups in life; how to bring something in there that diminishes the fear and the envy and begins to pull the pieces of human community back together again. And that's another way to look at this image of the water of life; it's like the glue that holds together human communities.

Q So, is this one of the reasons that you tend to work with both men and women in weekend workshops and groups?

A Yes, although I always have. My own feeling is that certain things can best be done in separate gender groups and certain things have to be done with people of both genders together. But also, I think, if a person isn't somewhat secure, or what I call grounded in their gender, they don't have a sense of their own gender ground and what it means to have the physical and emotional and psychic shape of a woman or of a man. Then,

it's very hard for them to successfully reach across and kind of enact or relate with the other gender.

One of the things that is very very positive and very encouraging is in the last couple of years, (I've been doing work with men and women for about fifteen years and then with separate groups of men for maybe ten or eleven years) I have seen, thankfully, a lot of evidence of the willingness of women and men to try coming together again, to kind of reconcile and at least make attempts at it.

To me, that indicates two things. One, probably some actual work has been completed or finished or some things have been accomplished by having the groups be separate.

Secondly, that the big and oppressive problems of culture, such as violence and despair and addiction and so on and so forth, all these great issues in culture are getting so large - or are already so big in the present - that

Vancouver's Gathering of Men

THE WISDOM COUNCIL

Come join us as we share our stories, myths, drumming, and the wisdom of our lives as men.

February 9: The Goodness of Men - A Celebration!

March 9: Your Power as a Man

April 13: Risking Intimacy

7 PM

New Location

Sunrise Park Community Hall
1950 Windemere
2 blocks south of 1st Ave
at Rupert

Bring a drum or rattle or other percussion instrument

\$3 - 5 donation
for costs

there is no way that they're going to be solved by one gender. I think people are beginning to realize that if there's going to be something done about the increasing number of homeless, about the increasing devastation of forests and rivers, about the increasing violence towards women and the increasing violence randomly exploding throughout the culture, if something is going to be done about all that stuff, it's going to require both genders. There's no way one gender is going to solve it.

I think for those two reasons there's an increasing desire to find ways for men and women to come closer together and to work closer together. So, it's one of the things I've been exploring in these workshops.

Q One other thing about this initiatory work. I'm going to quote from your work again, it says: "Too often our experience of personal crises and periods of change lead to paralysis and passivity." And I experience that in myself and I see that as a major

problem in the culture to get some fire up about these things.

A The other side of the problem. On some occasions, there's a lack of what I'm calling the water of life, which makes a person feel and actually be part of the human community and part of the community of this earth, a lack of that deep water that runs through the planet, but also runs emotionally through everybody's soul.

The opposite problem is when life has thrown obstacles and shocks and, for many people, even abuse, in such a way that their systems get stuck. A person gets either unable or afraid of making the next move because of shock or because of unhealed stuff often from the past. So, sometimes, what's really needed is the rekindling of the passion or the variety of passions that are inside each person.

And that rekindling usually happens amongst other people. In other words, when a person is stunned and

stuck in their tracks, it's very hard to move alone, to take the next step into the unknown alone. It's another occasion when the community can be supportive and even provide the first strike at the tinder to rekindle that fire - the fire for living a life out fully.

What I tend to do in working with groups of people is look, on the one hand, at the fire. Where is the fire? Is there too much, or is there not enough fire to keep things going, to keep the heat of life going? And then, conversely, has this water of the soul been found? Is the fire now too much for some people, or are people full of such inner rage and some sort of heated disturbance that they need some of these healing waters? And, in fact, each person needs to find those things over and over and often it's within a group of people, or within a community of people that a person actually can come to these realizations. ●

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Subscriptions are for those living outside the G.V.R.D only.

For those living within the G.V.R.D. your subscription is free with membership to Vancouver M.E.N. see page 22

The Wisdom Council - Men's work and the call to leadership

by John Salano

As men, doing men's work, we are engaged in sacred training. We have sought out ancient texts and wise mentors. We have trained, with a knowingness from our guts, that we have chosen the road less travelled.

There have been moments when we have stood on the edge of sanity, wondering if we were close to psychosis, being tempted to doubt the wisdom of our inner guides, and feeling a sense of hopelessness. We have felt desperate and panic-stricken. We view the world around us and see the heaviness of consensus reality as it weighs on the hearts and souls of the people.

In times like these, a man needs every ounce of his strength - emotionally, intellectually, and physically, but most of all he needs a connection to Source. He needs a sacred place of great magic where he can hone

his vision and open his heart. There is such a place. A place where men come to be reminded of their greatness. This place is the Wisdom Council.

Attendance at the Wisdom Council has quadrupled over the past several months. Each meeting brings new faces and degrees of intensity that can not be matched by any other forum. The Wisdom Council is a place of sacred training, and will be a place where leaders are born. Six men have already stepped forward to form the core which will guide and mentor this council. Men have stepped forward to help create special committees and groups which will further the interests of all men.

This sacred training has prepared us for our emergence into leadership. The time is Now! The Wisdom Council is seeking men and men's groups to create or help out on special projects, and to lead the council itself.

The next Wisdom Council will be held in a new and larger space, so contact us at 290-9988 for the location, time and date. If you or your men's group are interested in helping us, or if you need further information please call Cory Bretz at 732-4554 •

BANYEN BOOKS
PRESENTS

MICHAEL GURIAN

author of *Mothers, Sons & Lovers: How a Man's Relationship with His Mother Affects the Rest of His Life* and *The Prince and the King: Healing the Father-Son Wound*.

FRIDAY, APRIL 29—7:30 PM \$15

MOTHERS SONS & LOVERS:

How a Man's Relationship with His Mother Affects the Rest of His Life
an Evening for Men

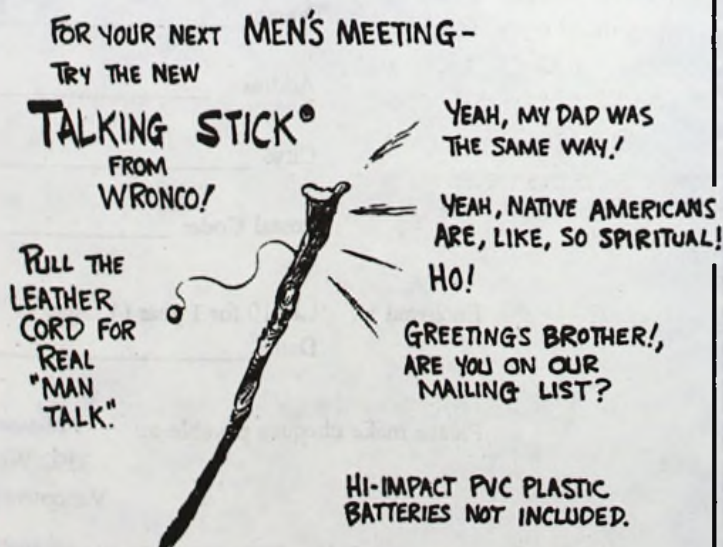
SATURDAY, APRIL 30—9:30-5 \$75

THE LOVER'S JOURNEY:

The 12 Stages of Intimate Partnership
a Day for Men and Women

Places: TBA

TICKETS: Banyen Sound (737-8858)
or write Banyen Books Tickets, 2671 W. Broadway,
Vancouver B.C. V6K 2G2
INFO: 879-4194



Peter Sinclair

Scar Stories

by Scott Carruthers

Some time ago, I had the honour of climbing a mountain with a group of men. Some were teenagers from a treatment program where they were learning options and skills to help them with the difficulties they experience in learning, socially, emotionally, and behaviorally. Some of the men were my older colleagues.

It was July and the goal of our journey was the peak at Mt. Frosty, somewhere in the neighbourhood of 8000 feet. The first leg of our journey was an old log hut past the half way point. We would camp overnight before the final ascent. As we struggled with gravity, the mountain, and motivation, we reached our camp and found that we were to lay among banks of snow. After prospecting for dry flat spaces for our tents amid trees and snow, we all gathered at our outdoor kitchen, a sunken covered porch off what was left of the hut. We cooked, fussed, joked and played around with the two pots that were to feed the eleven of us. The mist and spurts of rain huddled us in close and cosy.

After a time we told scar stories. I had previously experienced telling scar stories with other men. We started speaking of our scars in a jocular and boastful way, and . . . as if by some silent passionate agreement we slipped closer to each other and to our wounds. We shared and listened to stories about motorcycle accidents, blinded eyes, the girl in the grade 7 science class, sneers and snickers, sticks and stones, wounds of the flesh and the heart, all haunting memories. The wounds

were many and varied with more similarities than differences, with many painful layers. We honoured the things we didn't know or understand, our pasts, our many wishes that it could have been different. We honoured the history that we carry within us. There we were on the mountain, listening, witnessing, blessing, and healing each other. I cherish those memories, those scar stories, the intimacy, the caring, the healing, the honour.

At a recent ritual group for men I am again reminded of the healing power of telling our stories. Sharing our stories as men among men is to come out of isolation, and receive witnessing, blessing, healing, and honouring of our wounds. As men among men we are welcome and belong to a community many of us have longed for. ●

Need New Members

A small ritual men's group wants to add a few new members. Looking for mature (over 35) men familiar with mythopoetic men's work. We are moving toward nature & ritual, drumming, poetry, stories, to connect with each other and what is universal in our lives.

Call Dave 929-5762 or Bill 733-2689



Guy Corneau
back in Vancouver
June 17, 18 & 19

Look for more information in the
next issue of *Thunder Stick*

THE GENIE

by Phil Winkleman

Everyone of us is born with a Genie within. He is a very fragile being and only the wisest of parents can recognize and nurture him.

Each of us is trained not to feel our real emotions and to swallow the ensuing pain. Therefore we not only suppress our feelings, but we lose the gift of living life fully. I call it Paradise Lost. In the garden of Eden, the quest for the Tree of Knowledge overshadowed the experience of living in the garden. In our society the pursuit of knowledge has become the goal. It is worth noting that the logo for the Apple Computer is an Apple with a byte out of it. We are chasing knowledge at the expense of wisdom (Sophia).

Think for a moment of when you were young, before you started school. What was it like to get up knowing that you had the whole day ahead of you and all you had to do was to play. Rising before anyone else was up, I'd go over to my friend's house, knock on the door where his dad would answer still in his underwear and yell at me for waking everyone.

As Lorca wrote, "Oh, to have back the wonder I felt as a boy."

Our Genie is not about acquiring larger bank accounts, bigger toys, or climbing the corporate ladder. The Genie means not repressing feelings. Maybe women are right when they say that men live either in their heads or their penises and that everything in between is dead.

The Genie lives in the deepest recesses of ourselves. He may emerge as spirit, creativity, inspiration, intuition, spontaneity, playfulness or our inner guide. Within him is an aliveness that is concerned not so much with consequences, as with living Phil, John, or David to the fullest.

It means awakening the sleeping Genie that lies sleeping in some forgotten corner of our Psyches. He appears in dreams as the giant, monster or ferocious animal to remind us of our lost emotions and potentials. We run in fear from that greatness which has been seeking us. As Rumi said, "What you are looking for is what is looking."

We are all co-destroyers of the Genie in ourselves and those around us. One day my son Mark came home from school and proudly showed me his art work. I said, "It's good, BUT not good enough, to succeed as an artist in this world it must be perfect." I could in that moment see how I had killed his Genie, and he's never let it out of the bottle again.

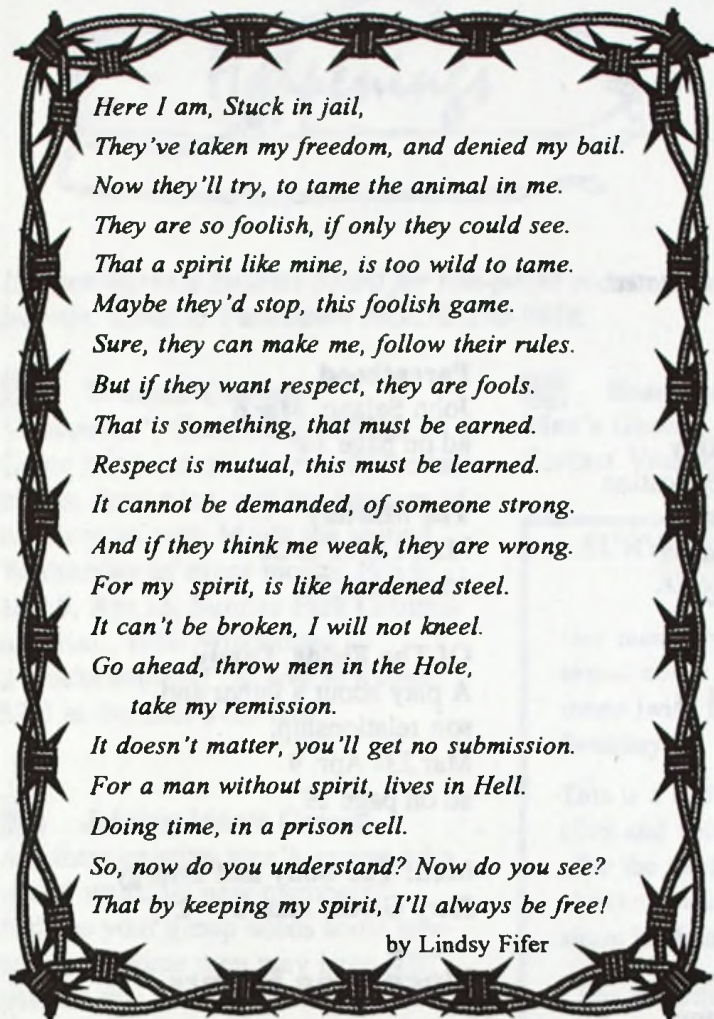
So, how do we contact our genie and coax him out of the bottle once more. How do we shed the heavy cloak laid upon us by our parents, siblings, and teachers?

Our Men's Groups are about taking that journey of rediscovery, finding our lost selves and that boyhood wonder. The magic of our Genie expresses himself in unique and wonder filled ways. A friend of mine told me that after working years of shift work he walked out one night and threw his lunch bucket in one direction and his watch in another. As he walked down the street he noticed some wooden carvings in a window, he thought "I can do as well as that" and bought himself some wood, some carving tools, and hasn't stopped to look back. ●

We're a men's group with four members who have been meeting for four years and are looking for another small, established group for joint meetings and possibly merging. If interested please call

Geoff at 684-2588





*Here I am, Stuck in jail,
They've taken my freedom, and denied my bail.
Now they'll try, to tame the animal in me.
They are so foolish, if only they could see.
That a spirit like mine, is too wild to tame.
Maybe they'd stop, this foolish game.
Sure, they can make me, follow their rules.
But if they want respect, they are fools.
That is something, that must be earned.
Respect is mutual, this must be learned.
It cannot be demanded, of someone strong.
And if they think me weak, they are wrong.
For my spirit, is like hardened steel.
It can't be broken, I will not kneel.
Go ahead, throw men in the Hole,
take my remission.
It doesn't matter, you'll get no submission.
For a man without spirit, lives in Hell.
Doing time, in a prison cell.
So, now do you understand? Now do you see?
That by keeping my spirit, I'll always be free!*

by Lindsay Fifer

Seperation, Divorce, Custody

Vancouver M.E.N. is in the process of forming a support group for men who are in need of strength, connection, and inspiration. It's in these tough times that we can be a source of healing for each other. Take care of yourself today by calling

Larry Harjadene at 275-0050

Articles

Art

Poetry

We are seeking submissions; articles, art, poetry, from men in the community on issues and concerns of men.

In particular we wish to publish articles by men and women that focus on the gender/relationship issues.

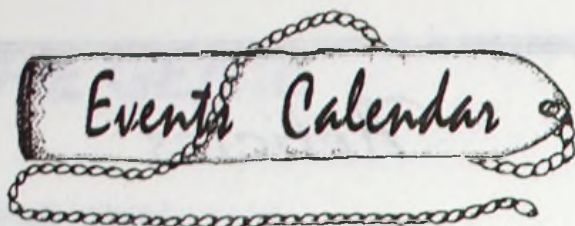
Phone or write
Vancouver M.E.N.
3392 West 34th Avenue,
Vancouver, B.C. V6N 2K6
290-9988


OF THE FIELDS, LATELY

A True To Life Drama
About A Father And Son
Relationship

STATION STREET ARTS CENTRE

March 23 - April 9
930 Station Street



Vancouver M.E.N.  events are for men only unless otherwise stated.

January

3 Part Presentation Series

John Salano, Jan. 16, 23 & 30
ad on page 14

Beyond the 12 Steps

John Salano, Jan. 16
ad on page 14

Introduction to the Men's Movement

John Salano, Jan. 25
ad on page 14

Introduction to the Men's Movement Part 2 - The Experience

John Salano, Jan. 26
ad on page 14

A Gathering of Men

John Salano, Jan. 30
ad on page 14

King, Warrior, Magician,

Weenie: Contemporary

*Men's Humour**, edited by

Peter Sinclair, is the source
of the cartoons in this issue.

We graciously thank Peter for
the use of his work. He is the
creator of the comic strip

Alex's Restaurant and lives
and works in Midland, Michi-
gan with his wife and two
children.

*Published by The Crossing
Press, Freedom, California,
95019.

February

International Men's Day

Second International Education
Forum and Celebration
Feb.7 for info: Tom Oaster
Box 10033 Kansas City,
Missouri 64111

The Men's Movement & Addiction Treatment

John Salano, Feb. 2
ad on page 14

Fatherhood

John Salano, Feb.6
ad on page 14

How to Create a Support, Discussion or Therapy Group

John Salano, Feb.9
ad on page 14

The Deep Structure of the Self

Feb. 10 -Mar. 17
ad on page 21

The Mind/Body Connection

John Salano, Feb.12
ad on page 14

Brothers In Arms,

Jerry Glock, Feb.15-20

Return to Empowerment

John Salano, Feb.16, ad on page 14

A Gathering of Men Part 2

John Salano, Feb.26, ad on page 14

March

Relationships, Can't Live with'em, Can't live without 'em

John Salano, Mar.2
ad on page 14

Parenthood

John Salano, Mar.6
ad on page 14

The Mastery

Mar. 18, 19 & 20
ad on page 20

Of The Fields, Lately

A play about a father and
son relationship,
Mar.23- Apr. 9
ad on page 29

Men: The Body and Energy

Jerry Glock, Mar. 24 - 27,

Upcoming Events

The Hazards of Love: Is Intimacy Possible

Andrew Feldmar, April 18
ad on page 21

Michael Gurian

April 29 & 30,
ad on page 26

Discovering Courage,

Brian Callahan, May 14 - 16,
ad on page 11

Ongoing Events



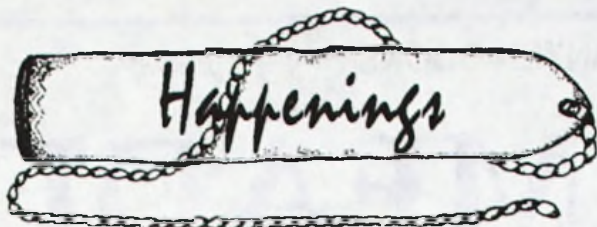
Men's Wisdom Council

The second Wednesday of every
month. 7:00-10:00 p.m.

see Happenings, ad on page 24

Survivors of Incest Anonymous

Gay men survivors of childhood
sexual abuse support group - meets
twice a week Monday and Saturday,
see announcement page 31



Happenings is a bulletin board for non-profit events of interest to men. Send bulletin items to Vancouver M.E.N. 290-9988.



Wisdom Council - Vancouver's Gathering of Men

Come join us as we share our stories, myths, drumming, and the wisdom of our lives as men. Meets the second Wednesday of every month. Feb.9, Mar.9, Apr.13. Sunrise Park Community Hall, 1950 Windemere - 2 blocks south of 1st Ave at Rupert \$3-5 at the door 7-10 pm.



Joining Men's Groups

Are there existing men's groups who would welcome new members? Perhaps your group needs some new energy or some men may have left? Discuss this possibility with your group and if it is of interest leave a message at Vancouver M.E.N.



Handbook for Starting a Men's Group.

Contact Vancouver M.E.N.

SURVIVORS OF INCEST ANONYMOUS

Gay men survivors of childhood sexual abuse support group - meets twice a week Monday and Saturday.

This is a self-help support group (free and voluntary) modeled after the twelve step program for survivors who want to heal the abuse in their lives.

For information call Robert
876-5071.

YOUR BROTHERS NEED YOUR HELP

The Vancouver Society for Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse
REALLY needs ASAP some men who have the energy:

1. To be on our board. Believe me, NO SPECIAL SKILLS ARE NEEDED. Just an enthusiasm for our mission. Time commitment? Only 1 1/2 to 2 hours per month.
2. To be consultants for "situations" that arise from time to time e.g. legal advice, medical input, painting, finding new premises etc.

We have helped over 300 men during the past three years and have more than 50 on our wait-list.

YOUR BROTHERS NEED YOUR HELP NOW.

PLEASE PHONE ME FOR MORE INFORMATION.

Les Leader, Board Member 222-1116



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present

MICHAEL MEADE

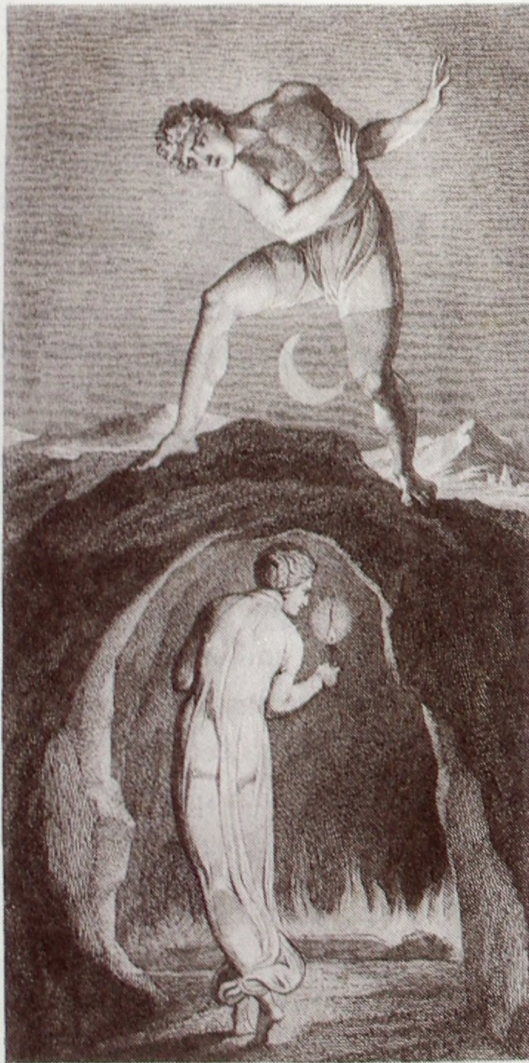
author of *Men and the Water of Life*. He is a story-teller, drummer, festival-maker, and accomplished scholar of mythology, literature, and ritual in traditional cultures. Incorporating drum, poems, myths and song, Meade's appearances are always fiery, challenging and entertaining.



FRIDAY, MARCH 4 — 7:30 pm STANDING ON THE THRESHOLD

Finding Purpose & Inner Authority in Troubled Times

Robson Square Conference Centre Theatre \$15



SATURDAY, MARCH 5 — Workshop THE FIRES OF CHANGE & THE WATER OF LIFE

*In Search of the Healing Waters which
Restore Creativity & the Capacity to Embrace
Life*

9:30—5:00 UBC Grad Student Centre \$80

Doors open at 9 am. Bring lunch.

THE "FIRES OF CHANGE" refers to those life-altering experiences which mark us forever, pulling us deeper into life than we would choose to go. While traumatic, these events also contain seeds of our spirit and uniqueness. Healing waters must be applied for these seeds to grow. But in a culture that is dried up and devoid of meaning, with great cracks between humans and nature, where can this healing water be found?

THE WATER OF LIFE flows on in abundance deep below the surface of our psyches. To venture to these depths, we must immerse ourselves in our mythic inheritance—the Old stories, the poems, the songs.

On this day we will work together as a community of men and women to identify and honour our own "fires of change" and seek healing moisture from the mythologies of the world.

TICKETS: Banyen Sound, 2669 W. Broadway (737-8858), or Octopus Books, 1146 Commercial Dr.
or write: Green Man Productions, 179 W. 62 Ave. Vancouver, B.C. V5X 2C9

Both events for men and women. INFO: 325-1412